

Aabhishek storms to a third title

Praises co-driver Venu for his impeccable calling



Coming up trumps: Aabhishek Mishra (co-driver Venu Rameshkumar) ran a perfect race on the final day to win comfortably. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

DESERT STORM

RAYAN ROZARIO

JAISALMER

After dominating the night stages as never before, Aabhishek Mishra (co-driver Venu Rameshkumar) kept cool on the road and brought home his car safe and secure to emerge champion of the Maruti Suzuki Desert Storm here on Friday.

Aabhishek was confident of shining bright on a really hot day as he had a 36-minute cushion over his nearest rival Raj Singh Rathore (Sagar Mallappa) going into the final leg.

Obviously, he did not want to do anything silly as he knew it was one of the shortest stage (25kms) of the event.

“It was the shortest but not the easiest as the pressure for any driver is only on the last day,” said Aabhishek after the victory.

The champion pictured the route well and with enough guidance from his co-driver from Coimbatore came out trumps in style. Both Aabhishek and Venu were determined to win this arduous event from the first day.

The early retirement of defending champion Suresh Rana (P.V.S. Murthy) of Team Maruti Suzuki Motorsport, after his Grand Vitara ran through technical issues, did take away some shine in the Xtreme category.

But after seeing the daring display of Aabhishek and the sound understanding that he had with his partner Venu, one gets the feeling that even if Rana had been around, Aabhishek would have still achieved his goal.

“Going into the stage today, one thing was very clear in our mind.

“We wanted to keep it easy as the lead was good

enough and that we had to sustain it and finish the stage. And, we stayed focussed and pushed hard wherever we could for the win,” said Aabhishek.

About his co-driver, he said that he has never had such an easy and fast connection with a navigator.

“But we both come from the same background – biking. I love to credit this win to him because he kept me going for the last six days.

“He was spot on with his calls and never missed anything or got lost. If I deserve anything, he deserves much more.”

For Aabhishek, it is his third Desert Storm title.

The last came in 2015 and he looks hungry for more.

The results: Xtreme: 1. Aabhishek Mishra (Venu Rameshkumar) 11:15:54; 2. Rajat Singh Rathore (Sagar Mallappa) 11:50:36; 3. Niju Padia (Nirav Mehta) 12:35:40.